U.S. Military Command Silent on Prison Raid

SAIGON, Nov. 24—American military spokesmen today refused to comment on Saturday's U.S. raid against a prison camp near Hanoi when they met newsmen at their daily briefing.

The only new bit of information came from an American Embassy spokesman who said Ambassador Ellsworth W. Bunker knew in advance the raid would take place.

Correspondents at the unusually crowded briefing reacted angrily to statements by military spokesmen that they had nothing to add to Washington announcements that American helicopter assault troops made an unsuccessful bid Saturday to free U.S. prisoners of war from the camp.

The newsmen were protesting the military command's silence over the raid and American bombing missions over North Vietnam at the weekend.

Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird, had said in Washington that Saturday's raiding party —believed in Saigon to have been mounted from the aircraft carrier Ranger—failed to find any prisoners at Son Tay, about 23 miles west of Hanoi. The group returned to its base, he added.

Meanwhile, today a light U.S. plane and a South Vietnamese helicopter collided in the air in the Mekong Delta, killing 4 Americans and 13 Vietnamese, authorities reported.

"There were no survivors," a South Vietnamese officer in the field said.

The officer said all three U.S. crewmen aboard the light plane were killed and another American died aboard the helicopter.

The collision occurred near Binhthuy air base about 80 miles south of Saigon. Field report said the Army Beaver, a single-engine utility aircraft, has just taken off from the base.